

Toy safety

EU must improve toy safety legislation

Greens/EFA were the only political group to vote against a rushed-through Directive on toy safety in December 2008. A new German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) study (1) has concluded that the legislation sets excessive limits on substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction. At the Greens/EFA Group's request, Commissioner Günther Verheugen made a statement to the EU Parliament plenary in Strasbourg yesterday evening.

German Green MEP **Heide Rühle**, member of the European Parliament's internal market and consumer protection committee, commented:

"It is time for the EU to belatedly take a safety first approach and revise legislation on toy safety. We welcome that the Commission will now review scientific evidence, but proper time should have been taken when the legislation was first passed. For the sake of a good news Christmas story, the Toy Safety Directive was rushed through in December last year [?] even though it would only take effect much later. Our concerns have been vindicated by a recent study which has found safety standards to be inadequate.

Cancer cases are on the rise among children, who are especially sensitive to toxic substances. We should always err on the side of caution when it comes to something as critical as children's health. The law should be revised to tighten restrictions on harmful substances and also to ensure that safety testing is carried out by an independent organisation, not the manufacturers themselves."

Notes to editors:

(1) BfR opinion on polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in toys (Summary in English)

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